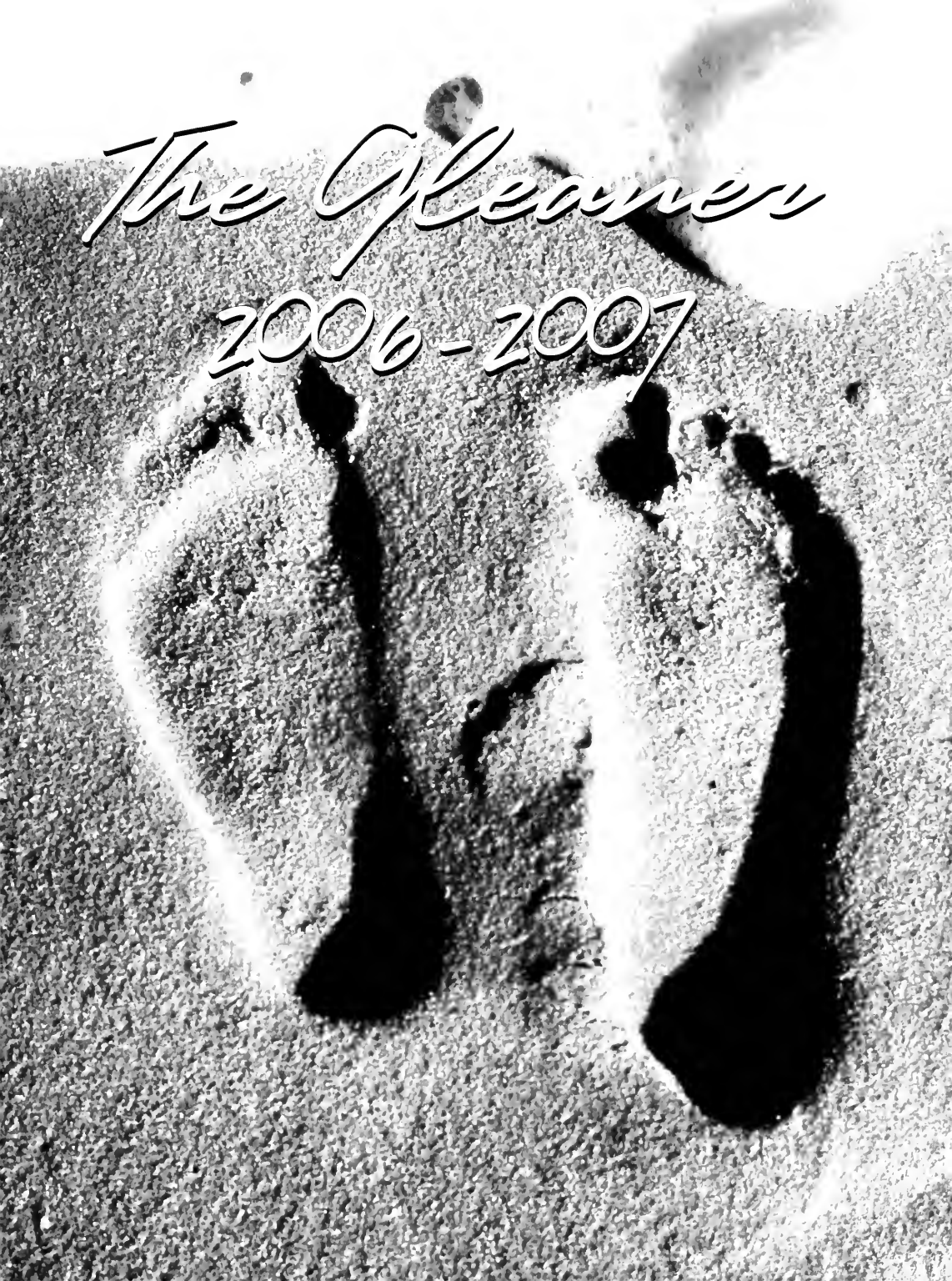


The Gleaner

2006-2007





The Gleaner *2006-2007*

Established 1901

Delaware Valley College
Doylestown, Pennsylvania

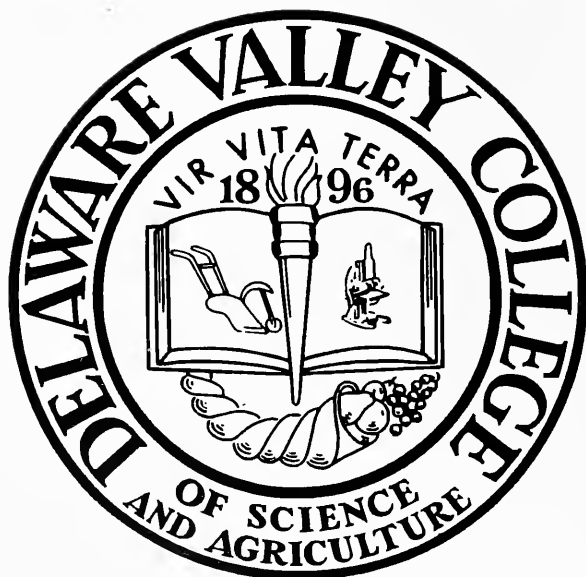
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2006-2007 Gleaner Staff



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Special thanks to the following:

*Dr. Linda Maisel for coordinating the
Gleaner High School Writing Competition*

*Mr. Barry Denlinger and
Tiger Printing Group, for their time and generosity*

Mr Hank F. Fox and Fox Bindery, Inc. for their time and generosity

The Visit to Lake Archer

Walking slowly down a winding pathway, the sun shimmers, the wind blowing gently through the branches. A familiar smell of culture carries past the senses. Leaves flowing gently to the ground. Hearing laughter, screaming, singing. Curiosity becomes unbearable. A magnificent mirror lies dormant covered by the tree's dressings. Visitors scattered expressing their own story, reason for peering into its glory.

Passing through, a girl sits relaxing-ly, anxiously awaiting the day's end. Another admires age and wisdom imprinted on the bark of nature's child. A best friend searches for a perfect spot to carve the name of the one who is always there. Feeling as if she traveled back to the past, bugs amuse her simple thoughts. An ant, a beetle...oh no! A spider!

Leaves spiral to the ground. Tranquility overwhelms the surroundings. Broken by angered voices, maybe joking, maybe not, one threatens the peace of another. Closer to the water's edge, she hangs onto the hand of uncertainty. Laughing, crying, emotions flying. Hiding them away from the world, a bush close by becomes shelter. No judging. No mocking. No more worries.

Look. There...underneath the glassy surface. From the gazebo, she points. A fish? No. maybe a shark! Cast in the line! Where did it go? Wait. Was that it? Wait.

A fish flops about, not wanting to leave its home. Already there, two home

bodies feel sympathy. Toss him back.
Splashing tear drops, it accepts him once
again. The ripples disrupt a train of
thought of the last visitor nearby. A grieving
heart entranced by the deep mysterious
water's edge. With a stick, she probes its
surface distracting her thoughts. Will a
new day arise? Will my sadness come and
go like the ripples in the water?

The mirror reflects the innermost
thoughts. So many visitors to come see its
glory, their tales told through another. It
welcomes, then says goodbye, awaiting
those of a new day.

Samantha Angelo



Photo by Brandi Hennion



Photo by Samantha Angelo

Nature seen through my eyes

The sky of wonders

The sea of dreams

The land of luscious fruit to be

The clouds of beauty

The space of time

The trees are weakened by the sea

The past of present

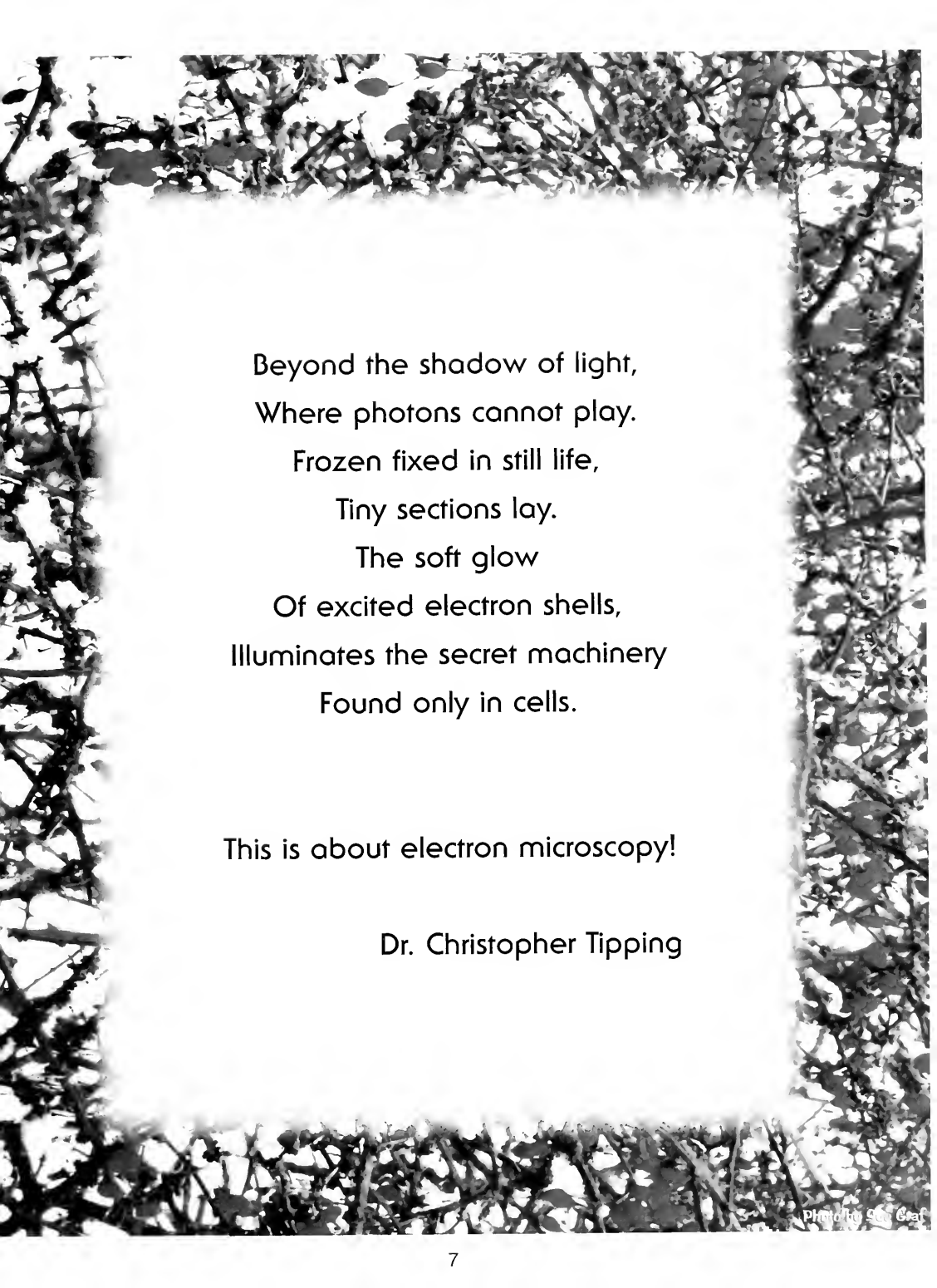
The present of past

The future is what you will unfold

The heart of gold the heart of the sun

The generation has just begun.

By Aria Williams



Beyond the shadow of light,
Where photons cannot play.
Frozen fixed in still life,
Tiny sections lay.
The soft glow
Of excited electron shells,
Illuminates the secret machinery
Found only in cells.

This is about electron microscopy!

Dr. Christopher Tipping

EVERYTHING CHANGES

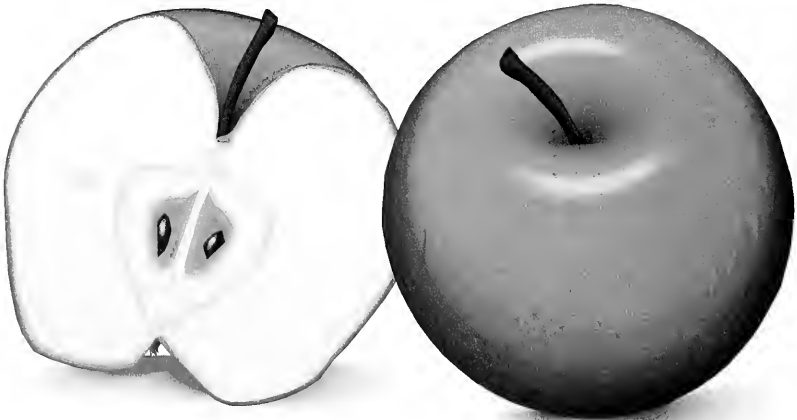
*bends, creases, wrinkles, ages,
then wanes; everything, everyone
all except my precious green
apples, so green so*

*sour, so great, tangy green
always with bite; always so
sour in day or at night.*

*Always the same dependable so
green and so stable so green
through and through, always so
sour, always so true.*

*Never with wrinkles no not a
crease; green green solid
green apples the same every
day. Eat them, enjoy them
digest them; be it A.M. or Midnight.*

Bernie Bernstein



Yellow Sneakers

From the outside he is dull, dressed in monotone style.

The only color which shows is the bright yellow of his sneakers.

And even that is dull, the tone faded by miles of walking through muddy streets.

Just him, his yellow sneakers and his black ensemble.

But maybe, deep down he really is bright.

Maybe he is the person which will create a cure for cancer:

Or maybe even AIDS.

But we'll never know because we step on those different,

Squashing the heels of our own yellow sneakers into his hopes and dreams.

We won't give him a chance because he's not like us.

We alienate those who don't dress like us, who fail to act and think like us.

He looks at life differently, he follows his own mind and path,

Even though that path causes him to become the outcast,

Who dresses in black and wears dog collars.

We don't like him because he is not like us,

And that is exactly why his yellow sneakers will never make it
out of this dead end town.

Because in order to succeed you have to have support,

And he'll never get it because he is not like us.



Ashlie Jarosiewicz

The Memories Stay

*The planes hit; the rumors fly.
The stone towers crumble; loved ones die.
Painful words; a river of tears.
A nation panics because of men without fears.
Children left motherless, families torn apart.
Friendships over before they start.
Hatred burns; flags fly high.
Too many flaws; no time to say goodbye.
Bombs are dropped and more lives taken.
Wonders destroyed, people mistaken.
Speeches of war; two different views.
Fires burning; NBC news.
A morbid cleanup; the stock market drops.
Fears of flying; a world stops.
Our lives change forever; a horrible day.
Events of 9/11; the memories stay.*

Ashlie Jarosiewicz



Two Bits for the Call

A number of years ago, I went downstairs to the playroom to see what my daughter, Casey, was doing. I guess she was four or five years old at the time. I found her sitting on the floor facing a wall where six or seven of her stuffed animals were lined up. She seemed to be talking to them and listening to their responses. I waited for a chance to break into the conversation.

Casey finally turned and looked at me. I asked her what was going on. She said, "I'm trying to figure out who I should marry." I smiled in spite of myself because she was so serious. I asked if she had made any decisions. Apparently, she had narrowed the field down to a large rabbit and a Teddy bear. She sighed and asked me, "How do you decide who you should marry?"

It is a tricky question for an adult. I told her she should pick someone who she loves and who loves her back just as much. I told her to pick someone she likes to spend her time with and who likes the same things she likes. To pick someone who treats her with respect. She thought about this and then looked at me. "Then I choose you," she said.

This year my daughter Casey turned eighteen. I drove her up to college in New Hampshire where she is an entering freshman. She and I took turns driving. She makes me a little nervous when she veers in and out of traffic, but I have learned

to keep my mouth shut and not to reach for a hold on the dashboard. She was clearly excited. We talked about possible majors, music, her friends, her brother... We veered in and out of topics with the same rhythms as her driving. When we got to her new school, there was a whole list of things to do: get an ID, get a room key, go to the bank, find her dorm, unload the car and carry everything up to her room. After two hours, we were done with the list. We walked back to the Commons. Groups of students were milling about. There was loud music. There was food, balloons, and information tables everywhere.

She turned to me and I could tell she wanted me to go. She hugged me and waved as she joined in the flow and eddies of students. I started to walk back to the car, but I kept stopping to look back to catch a glimpse of her. I finally saw her for a moment. It was hard for me to leave. I wasn't worried for her safety or her decision making ability. I looked back at a tall, confident, feminist-leaning woman with a black belt in karate. I just didn't want to leave the little girl who picked me over a bunny and a pretty darn good looking bear.

CALL YOUR PARENTS

Larry Stelmach



"A Phone, A Gun, And A Conscience"

As I sit here and talk, on the phone,
No one knows I'm really alone,
Maybe I have friends that I don't even know,
But what does that mean when I'm ready to go,
I know right and wrong, to tell the truth,
But I've never sat in that dark sin booth,
Before I couldn't see me doing it at all,
But now I visualize the splatter on the wall,
I'll be your boy who cried wolf too many times,
I'll be your dead poet who has no rhymes,
I'll destroy all of my good, sell my soul to the devil,
I wish I could have been, up on your level,
So when I tell you this time, that I'm for real,
Please listen to me, 'cuz that scar won't heal.

Jaryd Steinbacher

Emotions

Emotions both wonderful and terrible
Each action taken to make them bearable
Sometimes it comes out wrong
Depending on fears that come along
Icy shards in place of comfort and trust
What should be refuge becomes unjust
To create a place of safety where all can mend
To nurture not cut those who would be friend
To understand reasons behind the fears
Is our only saving grace to dry the tears

DAH

In Love

*So much to say.
Mind clouded of thoughts.
Thoughts of a better day.
Stomach tied in knots.
Having the right words.
Knowing exactly what to do.
Makes the vision blurred,
The brain has only the heart to listen to.*

A.R.



Photo by Lindsay Cropper

Apocalypse

It's on the wind...
The rumblings in the deep are getting louder
A distant crack, the thunder is warning us
The pounding of the rain
It's getting darker
It's in our minds...
Everyone knows it, everyone senses our demise
The gates of hell will open soon
Fear and terror grip our souls
The fire will consume us
It's in our eyes...
The ground splits open and quakes beneath us
Smoke fills the skies as hundreds die
I cannot hear you scream over
The screaming of the world
The end is here

Katie Sickles

Night Flames

The sun gone down
Its rays burned out
Beyond the rolling seas.
Gives birth to night
The darkness deep
And those in dreams asleep.

One by one they flutter forth
To invade a lonesome place
Until at once they light the night
A single color – in eternal space.
Flipping here and twirling there
Shadows retreat in fear
As flames of green and gold increase
And patterns arise so clear.

The moon goes dull
The stars seem bleak
Power lost in mystery.
As curious notes
Engulfed by breeze
Begin to form a melody.

The flames reign forth, their spell complete
The trees hang back with fright
As glitter flickers here and there
Such a mesmerizing sight.
With power and grace – the night wears on
A timeless piece of summer's grace
For all time the vision's true
Light in a darkened place.

But the spell wears thin
The flickers lose rhyme
The magic leaves the sky.
Until the night
When darkness reigns
Twill be no dancing fireflies.

“Kilburn Towers”

“Funny, the things you remember, and the things you don’t”—All About Eve

I don’t remember your name. If someone said Patrick, I wouldn’t argue, but I wouldn’t swear to it either. I don’t remember your face. If you were to sit next to me on a bus or a plane, I wouldn’t recognize you. Depending on my mood, I might strike up a conversation, but more than likely we would sit in silence, separating once we reached our respective destinations. How could I have forgotten the most important details? I just have, and that’s the truth.

A group of us were going to D.C. to meet up with some people we knew. The details remain sketchy. Somehow, I wound up riding in the back of your VW bug with you and your girlfriend. Maybe you remember the car? I remember her name.

I knew about you, of course. Your girlfriend was in my dorm, in a room right around the corner from mine. Just an acquaintance, really. I had spent some time there, and had heard a lot about you, so even though we had never met, you weren’t a stranger to me. Odd, that false sense of intimacy: so real, so one-sided.

Today, the two of you were having an argument, with the usual ebb and flow that most arguments have. I can still feel my discomfort; I was a voyeur missing the thrill of being caught. My only refuge was to lose myself in the music coming from the eight-track tape player. The same Bee Gees album: first one side, then the other, over and over. I could hear

the “click” of the switch from side to side. Before long, I stopped noticing the sound; I knew what was coming.

In spite of the repetition, or maybe because of it, I found myself waiting for one particular song. Each time it came on, I sang along quietly; it helped a little. But the argument kept going and going, just like the tape. Same themes, same recriminations, same songs: such awful symmetry.

Finally, during a brief lull in the action, she screamed at you to change the music. I saw your eyes in the rear view mirror. You told her that I was enjoying the music. I knew that wasn't the reason you refused her, but I didn't care. Suddenly, I had become a participant, a co-conspirator. I smiled. Take that, I thought. You're being such a bitch, so unreasonable. He hasn't done anything wrong, what the hell is the matter with you...

It was a relief to arrive at our destination. I met up with my friends, and later we went out to a club. When we arrived, you were there; she was nowhere to be seen. I can still see an outline of you: a beer in one hand, cigarette in the other, your hair plastered to your forehead like a drowning man. You asked me to dance, once, twice, again and again. “You look great; you dance so well.” I believed you; I had to. We had bonded, found common ground. She no longer mattered.

You asked me to leave the club with you, and I went. Afterwards, you walked me back to the house where I was staying. It was so late. I was so happy; you seemed to be. You'd call tomorrow; I'd wait for it. Whose house was it, I wonder?

My friends had seen me leave with you. They wanted all the gory, glorious details; I did my best to provide them over all the chatter. So many voices at once, like overlapping





signals on a car radio. Finally, it was decided that you deserved better, and apparently I fit the bill. Gradually, one by one, we fell asleep.

I never heard from you again. The two of you reunited briefly, and then went your separate ways. It was college, after all. A long time ago. And yet, in some respects, not long enough.

Are our memories one-sided as well? Are they a highlight for one, less than a footnote for the other? I really can't say.

I still listen to the song. It is a magic spell, and I am the conjurer of things long forgotten by some, but not by all.

Barbara Murphy Grimes



Thornley-Lindsey Crapper

Serenade

*As the last rays of the brightness from the sun fade,
The vivid streaks of blaze orange and magenta start to haze and dim.*

A blanket of lush green grass darkens,

A blue-black carpet of velvet slowly creeps from within the shadows to take its place.

*The twinkling stars in the blackened sky are gently wrapped in gauzy wisps of clouds and blotted out.
The frogs by the pond begin to serenade the crickets that have been playing a lovely tranquil tune since dusk.*

A girl steps out from the shelter of her house.

Her skin, like a moonbeam, is pale and smooth

Her wild locks are ever changing in the shadows; gold, crimson, honey, cinnamon, like a fire dancing in a storm.

Dark, thick, smudged clouds begin to fill the sky and chase the moon away.

Thunder rumbles and cracks.

Lightning dances to and fro.

Down into the velvet carpet it crashes.

The carpet flares with the colors of the rainbow, and then all is dark.

A tendril of smoke issues forth a weak hiss as it is slowly absorbed by the night sky.

The sky cries, great tears of rain drops pour from the bursting clouds.

The girl's filmy gown becomes plastered to her body as if it's a second skin.

Drops of liquid crystal slide down her hair and over her face.

*The drops continue down the white skin of her neck and into the bodice of her dress, sliding lazily between her
breasts and down along her ribs and over her belly.*

Down over her flared hips and along the length of her silken thigh it travels.

Down the contours of her slender calf and around her delicate ankle it goes, to gently slide off of her too into the black carpet it goes.

Blow does the wind, its fury unknown.

Like a jealous lover, its gusts pick up and whip about the girl.

The clouds respond, like a waterfall, torrents of rain pour forth, unleashed.

The girl is crashed, forced into the ground, like a flower being trampled.

The gallant moon pushes forth from its prison behind the clouds.

The clouds are weakened and slide away into the night with fear.

The wind dies down and mends its manners.

A nightingale calls from the far side of the garden.

The crickets respond and once again, begin their lovely tune.

Moonlight gently shines down upon the girl.

She awakes hungry and cold.

A young man calls from the garden's edge.

A slow sensual smile plays across her lips.

The young man walks over to her to offer his assistance.

She accepts his offer.

As he bends to lift her from the ground, two slender, white daggers extend beyond her garnet lips.

She lays her head in the cradle of his shoulder and gently breaks the skin.

A soft gasp escapes his lips as she slowly sucks out his life.

When her belly is full she delicately wipes her mouth with his kerchief.

She stretches slowly as she stands and winds her way back to the little house.

The moon shines full upon her path and the frogs have rejoined the serenade as she makes her way back inside.

By Kat O'Hara



Whenever we have moved from one state to another, which has been often, we always need to re-establish our basic support systems: find the best grocery store, locate an honest mechanic, see about a good doctor just in case, and find someone who can cut your hair and not leave you looking like one of the extras from Road Warrior. Having moved to West Virginia, this latter need was particularly difficult to satisfy. I generalize, of course, but most women around here like to sport do's that seem to be fashioned after their favorite country music star's hair, and as far as I can tell, the men really don't go in for getting their hair cut at all. It's just tied back and that's good enough. So, we had some trial and error – more like trial and terror – before we were recommended to Kenna in Oak Hill, now about forth-five minutes from where we live. Still, it's worth it, in all kinds of ways.

Kenna's place is a concrete-block affair at the bottom of a hill in what could only be described as a less-than-savory part of town. On the wall outside is a stylized eye, painted in red, with a wisp of hair above it and the words Hair by Kenna. Kenna's establishment is probably best likened to Floyd's barber shop from the Andy Griffith Show, at least in terms of its general function and atmosphere. It is a place where the regulars gather to chat, maybe get their hair done, and often just to rest their feet. At any given time there will be someone in the chair and quite a few others just sitting around, exchanging the news with Kenna. Kenna's place is always full, and Kenna is always cutting hair, but there are usually more people than not who have just come to talk.

Kenna herself is an interesting woman to both see and listen to. She has a shock of red hair which she sports as an Iroquois-style top-knot. Those who get their hair done by her do not seem to be at all dismayed by this. It is simply understood that that's the way Kenna likes her hair: up and out of her way so she can get down to business. Kenna explains her name to us on our first visit: She comes from a family of several siblings and her father had longed for a boy so that he could impart to him his favorite name: Kenneth. However, mother and father agreed that their next child would be their last, and so when Kenna came along, father, despairing of ever being able to impart his favorite name, decided to compromise with Kenna. "It was either then or nuthin'", Kenna says with a laugh.

Kenna has no reservations telling us about her personal life, particularly when she learns we have recently relocated and so are, to her way of thinking, traveled persons like herself. This is an important connection for our first conversation, because traveling is not something that most West Virginians do, and so Kenna has found an understanding audience at last. Kenna relates that upon graduation from high school

she ran away from home to North Carolina and joined the army: “Just fed up with thangs, y’ know?” She then did a tour in Germany which she thought was wonderful. It was terribly exotic and different. It was just what she had hoped for. Kenna was in charge of testing gas masks and biological-weapon suits. She passes along the story of the time when they were testing one suit in a ‘hot’ environment and it didn’t work. Her colleague was gassed pretty effectively. “It was not a purty sight,” she opines. “Stuff was comin’ purtty much outta every or’fice! Ugh!” When her tour was finished she considered re-upping, but thought that it was maybe time to get back to the States again. When she got back she realized that she really had no plans or any sense of what she wanted to do or where she wanted to be. As a result, she took what money she had and just bought a bunch of bus tickets” “Didn’t matter where, Honey. I just wanted to see thangs, y’know? So off I went. Went all over the place. It was plumb great!”

After traveling for a while, she decided she wanted to come back home and start up a beautician’s place and get married, and that’s just what she did. The marriage didn’t go on very long, or so we gather, but Kenna’s place is doing quite well.

Kenna is our hair-cutter. At least, that’s the way we think of her. Surely she would not consider herself a Barber or even a Stylist. “Beautician” is the word she prefers, but I think she only uses it because she says it rhymes with “magician.”

We were at Kenna’s place the last Thursday before Christmas. When we arrived some of the regulars were there. Drema sat over by the cash register, Detra and her daughter were also there, and two other older women that I didn’t recognize. Julie and I took some piles of magazines off a couple of chairs and sat down to wait. In the corner Kenna has a Christmas tree, decorated with various plastic curlers and wisps of garishly colored wig snippings. It’s interesting, and I say so. Drema says it’s “right purrty, now you mention it.” Kenna gives one of her patented snorts and snips away at the elderly lady in the chair. In a short while another lady comes in and Kenna asks if she’s wanting an appointment. However, the lady says she’s just looking for a local doctor and wants directions. Upon learning who it is that she’s looking for, Kenna puts down her scissors and puts an arm around the stranger and directs her out the door so she can point out which direction the woman should take. Kenna says: “And it’s close, too. Why, Honey, you’re so close you can smell his feet.” Thus assured, the stranger heads off.

The conversation takes up with Drema’s recent run-in with the law. Drema is 40ish or so, clearly weighs in at roughly 250 pounds, and is not someone you’d like to mess with if you know what’s good for you. Drema starts off the story by relating her troubles with her daughter’s “nervous ailment.” This involves some sort of serious

sneezing fit whenever she is under duress. "And it is jist awful," Drema laments. "When she gets a-goin' then the snot is simply flyin' everywhere. It's on the walls and her toys and everything." Julie and I are trying not to laugh. Drema might not understand that we find this funny. Drema goes on to explain how she recently ended up in the county lock-up. "Wall, that stoopid prince'pal down at the school, he calls my girl a liar. With me jist sittin' there in front of him." Kenna snickers at this. Clearly this is not a good thing to do. "Wall, I told him to apologize and he says he ain't apologizing to no liar. That's when I grabbed his tie and yanked, and right across that desk he come. I drug him all the way to the parkin' lot. Course, later I had to call my ol' man to come get my daughter, 'cause they are a-takin' me to jail!" She gives a big laugh to this, and then shakes her head a bit. "Hunnert hours of community service. Huh." Her daughter is apparently doing better now that she is on medication. "Is that some sort of psychotic drug?" Kenna asks. "Don't know," Drema says. "I jist give it to her twice a day."

The phone rings then and Kenna picks it up. She is talking to someone who clearly has a mutual friend. "Well," Kenna says into the phone, "Wandalena was feelin' purrty under the weather, but she checked herself outta the hospital nevertheless." Julie and I exchange glances across the room. "Wandalena?" Julie mouths. Julie clasps a hand over her mouth and I try to take deep breaths and not meet her eyes. The conversation continues: "Well, Wandalena was supposed to go over to Mary Canterbury's tonight." Julie is now squinting and gets up and heads to the bathroom. I am gasping and trying hard to read a sentence from Esquire. Julie comes back later and will not look at me. If she does, I am sure she will bust out laughing. Drema might take offense at this.

Thankfully someone else comes in at this moment. It's Jack. Given the naming traditions in West Virginia, I am relieved to find out that Jack is really Jackie. She is a stout, gray-haired lady who has come in to buy cigarette lighters from Kenna as stocking-stuffers. She sports a sweatshirt with "Army" on the front and is one of those people who obviously has lots of energy. "Even if ya don't smoke," she says, "ya oughtta always have a lighter on hand. Never know when ya wanna get somethin' hot." She laughs and so does everyone else. Clearly this is an inside joke we're not aware of. Jack relates an off-color joke then. When the laughter subsides she turns to me and says "Sorry sir, but that's what you get for hangin' out in a beauty parlor." Jack gets her lighters and takes a seat. It's getting cold outside.

So,

It's my turn finally and Kenna gets me in the chair. She, like all other hair-cut-

ters I've ever known, has a large mirror in front of the chair. However, she never faces any of her customers so that they might actually watch what's going on as their hair is being cut. I guess this is the result of Kenna's need to face her audience while talking, and this is of course going on ceaselessly.

For me, the disadvantage of this is not that I can't see what's going on, but rather because I am now facing Detra and her daughter across the small room. Detra's daughter, whose name I've never caught, is about 30ish and is very well dressed. In fact, she may be the best-dressed person I've ever seen in Oak Hill. However, it is distressing to be facing her because her eyes go in two different directions, and when she talks, which is rare, you can't tell if she's talking to you or someone else. The fact that she doesn't talk is probably a good thing. Julie says she reminds her of Billy Bob Thornton's role in *Sling Blade*. Sad, but true.

It is near the Holidays, and so the conversation turns to gift-giving. Kenna asks Jack if she'll get her a man for Christmas. "Any sort at all will do," Kenna says. "Long's he got arms and legs and the other parts I'm okay with him." This mention of a man brings Detra back to life, who relates the story of a recent encounter with a strange man in the woods by her place. This is pretty scary stuff, but thankfully nothing came of it. Kenna, however, says "Man, I'd be out wanderin' in them woods tryin' to get raped if it were me!"

Then the talk moves on to Drema's account of her second husband giving her a pressure cooker for Christmas. "And what the hell am I gonna do with that thang? God knows I'd blow the house down with it!" Detra concurs, and in a small voice says "That's just what happened with me, with a mess of beans. They went everywhere." This, in turn, reminds Kenna of another Christmas cooking fiasco. She tells how her one-time husband was from Pennsylvania and that "Them Pennsylvanians is crazy for chestnuts. He was after me about it for weeks, so damn if I didn't go get some and make 'em. So, there they was, in the oven, and we was in the front room. Then I hear a loud 'pop!' I come out and open the oven and it's like Viet Nahm in there! Chestnuts were just explodin' like crazy. I ducked and one went and bust out the light bulb," she whoops. 'Shrapnel is flyin' all over the place, and that husband of mine is so mad 'cause now he can't have his chestnuts. He's mad at me for hours. Then, later, he starts laughin'. He says 'Now I remember, you're supposed to put a cut in the shells to let the steam out!'"

My hair is done and it's Julie's turn.

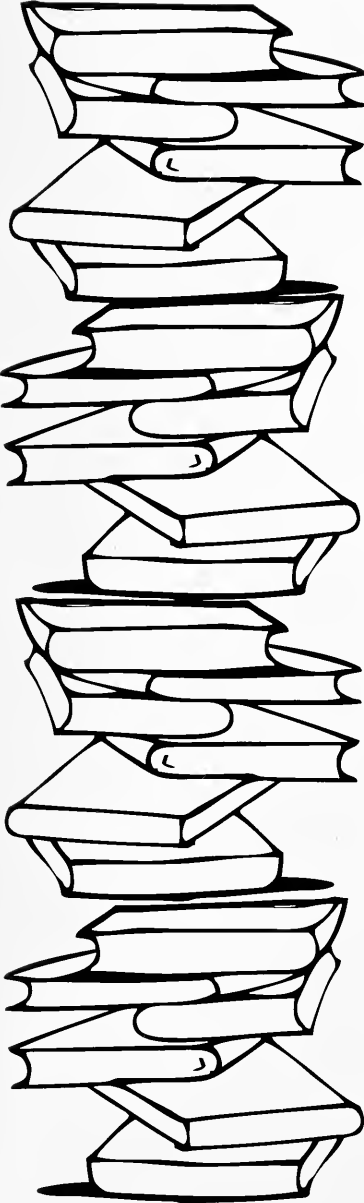
Dr. Gregg A. Smith

I AM A PILER

MY NAME IS STEVE . . . AND I AM A PILER. ANY FLAT SURFACE SOLID ENOUGH TO WITHSTAND A GRAVITATIONAL LOAD IS LIKELY TO BECOME BURIED WITH PAPERS, LETTERS, MAGAZINES, AND BOOKS. MY DESKTOP IS ABLE TO SYMPATHIZE WITH THE BLIND CRICKETS OF MAMMOTH CAVE WHO NEVER SEE THE SUN. A TABLE, A CHAIR, A TV TABLE ARE AT RISK OF BEING ENGULFED BY MY LIFE'S FLATWARE.

IN MY DEFENSE, I WISH TO POINT OUT TO YOU, GOOD READER, THAT WHAT APPEARS TO AN UNINFORMED BY-STANDER TO BE A CHAOTIC MESS ON MY DESK IS, IN FACT, AN ACHAOTIC MESS. WHILE CHAOS MAY BE DEFINED AS "LACK OF ORDER", I WOULD DESCRIBE MY MESS AS A LACK OF COMPLETE DISORDER. UNDER AND WITHIN THE PILES, I KNOW, IN SURPRISING DETAIL, THE LOCATION AND CHARACTER OF THEIR CONTENTS. A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF MY DESK MIGHT HELP YOU TO ENVISION THIS. IN THE UPPER LEFT CORNER IS A PILE OF OLD PAPERS THAT HAVE BEEN WAITING TO BE PROPERLY FILED IN MY CABINET. KEEP WAITING, FRIENDS. IT IS ABOUT 12 INCHES DEEP. I AFFECTIONATELY REFER TO IT AS PILE A. TWO SLIPPERY MAGAZINES HAVE CAUSED PILE B TO TILT AND LEAN AGAINST ITS NEIGHBOR, PILE C, FORMING A KIND OF BRIDGE THAT SUPPORTS A KIND OF HYBRID PILE, CAREFULLY BALANCED, THAT IS BOTH B AND C. TOGETHER, THE TRIO HAS THE APPEARANCE OF AN UPSIDE DOWN Y OR GOAL POST. THE URGENCY OF READING THESE MAGAZINES IS ONLY SLIGHTLY GREATER THAN MY URGENCY IN FILING THE CONTENTS OF PILE A. NOW, PILE D DESERVES SOME SPECIAL ATTENTION. IT CONTAINS TIME-SENSITIVE PAPERS, FORMS, MEMOS AND THE LIKE. THE ITEM AT THE BOTTOM OF THIS PILE HAS BEEN THERE SINCE THE END OF THE LAST FISCAL YEAR. SO MUCH FOR TIME-SENSITIVITY. I STATED THAT I KNOW EACH PILE'S CONTENTS; I HAVE NOT CLAIMED TO ACT ON THEIR DEMANDS. PLEASE DON'T TELL MY SUPERVISORS ABOUT THIS.

YOU, PATIENT READER, ARE, NO DOUBT, MORE ORDERLY THAN I AM. MOST PEOPLE ARE. I ONCE SHARED AN OFFICE WITH A WOMAN WHO WAS SO ORDERLY, SO NEAT, SO EFFICIENT, SO DISCIPLINED, THAT MY JEALOUSY WAS SECONDED ONLY BY MY AWE. AT THE END OF EACH DAY, THE ONLY ITEMS ON HER DESK WERE A DICTIONARY (IT WAS CONTAINED BY TWO BOOK-ENDS) AND A BOX OF TISSUES. HER LAST ACT EVERY FRIDAY WAS TO WIPE HER DESK TOP WITH LEMON PLEDGE. I REMEMBER

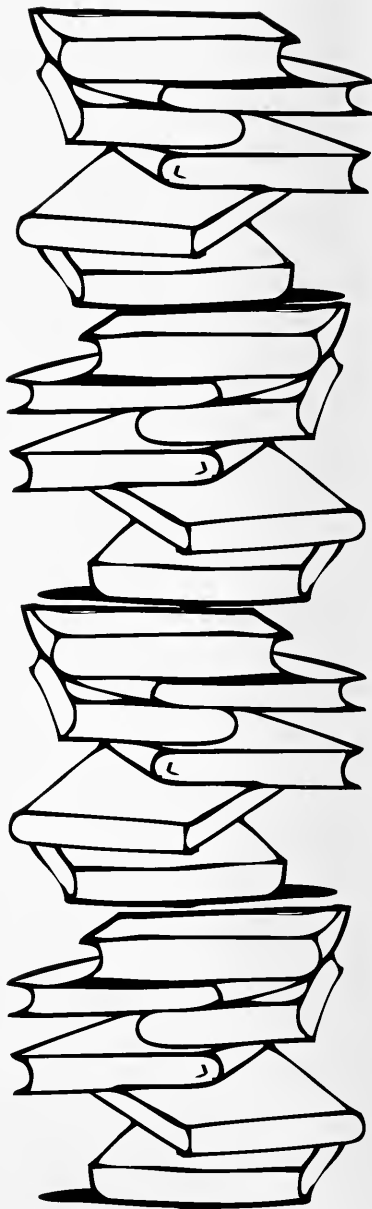


AN OCCASION IN WHICH SHE ALLOWED A NOTEBOOK TO CLUTTER HER DESK FOR A FULL TWO DAYS. I LATER LEARNED THAT SHE HAD BEEN SUFFERING FROM THE FLU AND WAS "NOT HERSELF". I FORGAVE HER FOR HER TRESPASSES. IF SHE HADN'T BEEN SO FRIENDLY, SMART, EFFICIENT, AND PRETTY, I AM SORRY TO ADMIT THAT I THINK I WOULD HAVE ALLOWED MYSELF TO HATE HER.

PEOPLE OF MY ILK ARE A STIGMATIZED MINORITY IN OUR SOCIETY. WE ARE CONTINUALLY BURDENED WITH THE NEED TO KEEP OUR SECRET HIDDEN AND CLOSETED. HOWEVER, OUR CLOSETS ARE SO CLUTTERED, THERE IS NO ROOM FOR US THERE. SO, WE BECOME OUTED BY OWN MESSAGES. SOME OF US REMAIN ALOOF TO THE GREATER SOCIETY IN THE HOPE OF AVOIDING THE CRITICAL STARES, SHAKING HEADS, AND GOSSIP OF OUR COLLEAGUES AND FAMILIES. SOME OF THE BRAVE AMONG US HAVE DETERMINED THAT THEY ARE WHAT THEY ARE AND GOD STILL LOVES THEM. THEY KNOW THAT THE SUM OF THEIR CHARACTER MAKES THEM MORE THAN MERE PILERS. THEY WALK IN THE WORLD WITHOUT SHAME OR APOLOGY. THEY MERELY WANT TO BE LEFT ALONE BY BIGOTS AND POLITICIANS. A FEW OF US SHOW UP ON THE JERRY SPRINGER SHOW.

I NO LONGER CARRY THE FEELINGS OF GUILT THAT SOCIETY WOULD LIKE TO PILE ON ME. SOME "EXPERTS" SAY THAT THE PENCHANT FOR PILING IS LEARNED AND THAT PILERS CHOOSE TO BE THAT WAY. RECENT BRAIN RESEARCH, HOWEVER, HAS INDICATED THAT BEING A PILER IS DUE TO GENETICS. AS FOR ME, I KNOW I INHERITED THIS BEHAVIOR FROM MY FATHER. HE INHERITED IT FROM HIS MOTHER WHO, FAMILY LORE HAS INFORMED ME, INHERITED IT FROM HER MOTHER. FROM THERE THE TRAIL GOES COLD. I DO NOT KNOW THE LOCATION OF THE HEADWATERS OF THIS GENETIC DISPOSITION IN MY FAMILY. BUT, SIMPLY KNOWING THAT THIS CHARACTER IS NOT MY FAULT IS QUITE COMFORTING. I DECLARE TO YOU, GOD MADE ME THIS WAY. MARK TWAIN ASKED, "WHY DO WE CONDEMN THE CAT, WHO WAS DESIGNED BY ITS CREATOR TO BE SO CRUEL TO ITS PREY? DOESN'T SUCH CONDEMNATION CRITICIZE THE GREAT ARCHITECT ITSELF?" THIS IS PARAPHRASING TWAIN, OF COURSE. I WOULD LIKE TO QUOTE HIM VERBATIM, BUT MY COPY OF AMERICAN HUMORISTS IS NEAR THE BOTTOM OF PILE E. AND I DON'T FEEL LIKE DISTURBING IT RIGHT NOW.

DR. STEVE DEBROUX



WHOEVER SAID JUNE, JULY, AND AUGUST ARE THREE GOOD REASONS FOR TEACHING?

"You're not making \$10,000.00 a year yet are you?" asked my mom on one of our many trips to Oregon. "Mom, I'm making more than that, I'm a college professor," and I told her the salary figure. It was over \$20,000. Compared with her \$4,500-\$5,000 maximum as an elementary school teacher in the 1950's and 60's mine seemed like a king's ransom!

Why did I choose to become a teacher? Probably because our mother was a teacher, not only of four boys and of the Junior Boys class in Sandy Community Church Sunday School, but also an elementary school teacher at four different schools in Nebraska and Oregon. Furthermore, Mom's brother, Uncle Everett and his wife, Aunt Anne, were also elementary school teachers in rural Idaho. These were my early mentors. Later, my first grade teacher in Sandy [Oregon] elementary school, Mrs. Ruth Mitchell, the eighth grade one, Mr. Lane-who at age 90 recently attended our 50th high school reunion in Oregon-and my high school English and French teacher, Mrs. Edith Jonteggaard, whom I adored even though she was tough, were further sources of inspiration to me. It was she who encouraged me enough in French to win the Prix d'Honneur award. They were always professionally groomed, used excellent grammar, knew each of us students by first and last names, and even allowed room mothers to bring in special treats for us from time to time. And their standards for excellence were high and gained our respect.

One graduate professor stands out for his teaching technique: Dr. Timothy Lin, who used to tell me, "Zionar, you never write a good first draft but you always benefit by re-writing." It takes me a while to get it right and to "Git 'r done."

I used to think that I'd be at Delaware Valley College for three to five years because when my wife and I first married we lived in Doylestown and New Britain during our honeymoon years. Glancing back now at forty years at Delaware Valley College I can verify Job's utterance, "Our years pass by swifter than a weaver's shuttle" or St. James's, "Our life is a vapor."

Dr. Arthur Braun, whom I replaced in teaching Philosophy and Sociology at DVC, sat next to me on a bench in front of Allman Building on the day of my interview, May 1966. When I questioned him about the uncertainty of how effective I'd be teaching at an agricultural college, he replied, "You'll do just fine." I tried.

One of the first issues was scheduling office hours for the students and classes and an encouragement to get "broken in" by teaching Summer School first. Another was meeting the storm Dr. Work, then the president and its fearless leader. Salary negotiation netted me \$7,000.00 that first year in 1966-67, and Dr. Work said if I did a good job, I'd get a \$500 raise the next year. When that time came, the dean called me into his office to have me sign the contract for the following year. I gazed in dismay at the \$250.00 raise and told him so. He said there was nothing he could do about it but that I was welcomed to speak with Dr. Work. When I confronted Dr. Work with my diary in which I had written \$500 for doing a good job, he replied, "Did I say that?"

"Yes, that's what I wrote; did I do a good job?" Affirmative reply.

"Give me that @#!\$ Paper." He crossed out the \$250, replacing it with \$500 and said, "Take that to the @#!\$ dean." I was stunned not only by his profanity but also that salary was so easy to negotiate and gained great respect for the second founder of DVC-the founder of the 4-year College, even though his vocabulary mirrored that of my lumberjack Oregonian ancestors.

It is said we remember the very good and the very bad students. I can't say which it is for me, but teaching has given me the decade experience that my mother enjoyed times four. Upon visiting classmates, relatives, or friends in Oregon, I usually meet someone who says, "Your method was my 3rd or 4th grade teacher way back when." Her legacy lives on in their memories, and her mentorship validates why I chose teaching.

The traditional apple for me, a teacher, has included sacks of potatoes, duck eggs, fresh horse radish, mushrooms, produce, pies, wasson, maple syrup, scores of cards at Christmas, Valentine's Day, birthdays, and yes; even Father's Day.

During the intervening years of my own years in the classroom I've been the recipient of so much kindness that I feel I owe everybody I know-that John Donne or Milton was right in saying, "I'm a part of all I've met."

Dr. Richard C. Zionar, Professor of Liberal Arts

Legacy

*A legacy left for our children
Is it fair to pass this world on?*

Corrupted

Twisted

*Not nearly as intended
The natural world in shambles*

*Species disappearing
Environments paved over*

*A wasteland remains
In the name of progress*

*A legacy is left for our children
Venice is sinking*

*Iraq is burning
The bombs are dropping
The people are dying
In the name of progress*

*A legacy left for our children
Each generation leaves a legacy
Each is a little deeper, a little darker
A formidable legacy that never improves
Sinking deeper until we are no more*

11-28-04

Aimee Strouse



Photo by Danielle Friedrich

The Rings

*There's dust on a pair of wedding rings,
And the engagement ring no longer gleams,
With a fiery love which knows no fear.*

Because they can sense in their metal that divorce is near.

*So why would they shine and deliver a lie,
When there is no longer a lovers' light in their wearers' eye?*

So they'll tarnish their color, they don't care anymore.

They will never again be united; they'll be thrown in a drawer.

Forgotten symbols of yesteryear they will lie in the dark — alone.

And what they once stood for will lie in blackness — unknown.

Ashlie Jarosiewicz





Photo by Lindsay Cropper

WHEN DOES IT DO THE GROWING

*When, just when does my grape
Arbor grow – does anyone
Does anyone know
Does anyone – can anyone
See.....not me.*

*Tens, hundreds of new shiny
Leaves – of new bright leaves
Scores of twining stringy swinging
Vines – canes anew sprout clusters
Of concord grapes – form – then
Grow – does anyone know
Can anyone see.*

*From April to July – some sixty
Days or so....yet I see not
I see nothing of their growing.
That grapevine of mine remains
A mystery. Nothing of their
Growing do I see.*

*Not a leaf – not a sprout – not
A cane can I see grow.
Nothing of their growing can I
Watch – only their lush lush
After-growth do I spot.*

Bernie Bernstein

Valour Thus Honour

When such a thing will come at last,
Night shall render weak and come to pass.
And through such shimmering armor will retreat,
That which once was thought lost in defeat.

No shield – no sail of boat be strong
Enough to hold this storm for long.
Powers beyond have issued as such
And all must accept this will by touch.

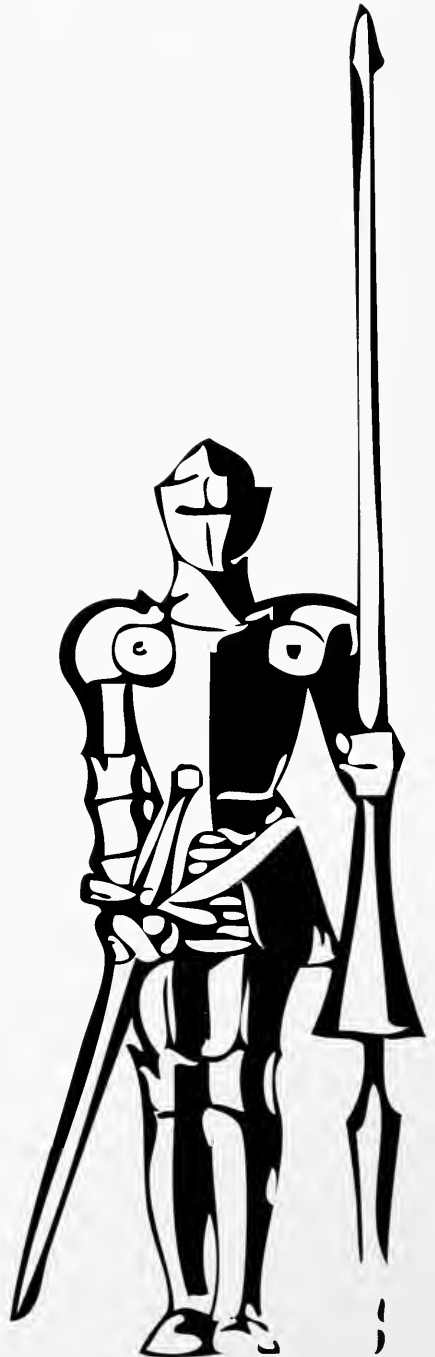
The valiant and true shall no longer disdain,
For they have won their highest such fame.
His truth and soul have shown to all
He sacrificed love to honor – letting it befall.

And he went forging all power forth,
Knowing for you only endless love and worth.
Watching in fields as darkness ensued
Holding to his hope's last lingering truth.

Thus behold the Sun gleaming beyond!
Masking the stars of which maidens are fond.
Also see that Nature revives,
Creating beauty to which men could only strive.

And now he sits so exalted in love,
King of Truth honored from above.
For he has restored this land to a rightful path,
Thus being awarded love only he could have....

LMP





Morning
Hello world,
Hello light,
Hello morning star,
The spouse to heavens night light.
Good morning earth,
Good morning sky,
The couple apart that birthed the between.
Wake up sea,
Wake up ocean,
Wake up rivers,
The playful children of a devious equation.
Hello world,
Hello people,
This life is just for fun...

3/3/05 Asia Williams

FATHER

THIS LIFE IS BUT A LIE IN TRUTH IN HIDING. EACH DAY
PASSES BY AND WISHES OF CHANGE SHOWS IN EYE.
WAITING FOR THE DAY WHEN THIS MONSTER WILL BE
PUT TO REST. MISERY AND DESTRUCTION WILL BE ITS
FINAL TEST. ALL MY FIRST DAYS SPENT WITHOUT CARE
OR CONCERN. LIVING BEHIND A LIE PLOTTED FOR ME
TO LEARN. TILL MY LAST DAYS OF IMMATURITY. MY LAST
DAYS OF INSECURITY. MY BEGINNINGS TO MY END. THE
BEGINNINGS TO MY DESTINY TO SPEND. ETERNITY OF
LIFE WITH A HOLE IN MY HEART. A BLEEDING PIECE OF
ART. YOU SHOT ME MANY A TIME IN HEART AND SOUL.
A SCAR THAT WILL STAY WITH ME TILL I'M OLD. I DON'T
KNOW YOU ANYMORE. A STRANGER IN THE MORGUE.
THIS SHIFT IN YOU CAUSED SUCH AN IMBALANCE. A
WORKER BEE CAUGHT IN A TRANCE. SET ON RICHES TO
CURE LIFE'S PROPER OBSTACLES. BURNING FOND FAMIL-
IAR MEMORIES UPON YOUR SECRET MANTLE. YOU'RE
GOING DOWN HILL AND YOU'RE TAKING US WITH YOU.
TO TELL YOU THE TRUTH I STILL LOVE YOU. BUT NOW
KNOWING THE GOD GIVEN TRUTH. IT'S HARD TO SEE
WHAT YOU'VE BECOME AND LIKE YOU. EVERY DAY WAS
THOUGHT THAT YOU WERE FATHER. BUT INSTEAD I
FOUND MYSELF THE EXPERIMENTAL PET RATHER THAN
YOUR LOVING AND ONLY DAUGHTER.

TO BE CONTINUED...



Photo by Sue Graf

I'M SCARED

I'M AFRAID MY LOVE HAS NO MORE LOVE FOR ME
ALL SHE NEEDS IS TIME
TIME TO THINK ABOUT IF IT'S TRUE AND WILL BE
NO MATTER THE PART OF DAY SHE'S ON MY MIND

I FEEL WEAK BECAUSE ALL I WANT TO DO IS BREAK DOWN
IT HELPS BUT KILLS
MY LOVE IS STRONG FOR BOTH OF US IF SHE'D JUST COME AROUND
BUT IT SEEMS SHE DOESN'T CARE HOW I FEEL

I PUT HER THROUGH PAIN' BUT I NEVER SAID I NEED TO KNOW
I DO KNOW' SHES ALL I KNOW ' BABY GIRL
WE DON'T NEED TO GROW APART' BUT JUST GROW
TOGETHER' BUT IT'S SHRINKING' MY WORLD

SHE USED TO TELL ME SHE DIDN'T WANT TO START ALL OVER AGAIN
KEEPING ME UP' BUT THEN BREAKING ME DOWN
I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S REAL ANYMORE
IT'S A BIG CITY' AND I'M STUCK IN THIS LITTLE TOWN

I GAVE HER A GIFT AND SHE BARELY LOOKED AT IT
LEFT MY HEART IN MY CAR DOOR
AT THE TIME IT WAS SUPPOSED TO SATISFY HER LOVE FOR ME' I ADMIT
YOU CAN'T BUY THIS LOVE AT ANY KIND OF STORE

I WISH I WASN'T CURSED WITH BLINDNESS
SHE STOOD WITH ME WHEN I HURT HER MOST
I SWEAR IF I COULD I'D TAKE IT ALL BACK' I'M NOT LYING ABOUT THIS
I'D CHERISH HER SO MUCH' I MISS HER' AND NOT JUST A SCOTCH'

YOU LOVE SOMEONE' YOU LET THEM GO
BUT WHAT IF THEY DON'T COME BACK'
I THOUGHT WE HAD NOTHING TO THINK ABOUT AND NOW I KNOW
ONE SIDED LOVE' SMACK

SHE KNOWS HOW I FEEL' BUT SHE'S BLINDED AS WELL
THIS IS WHAT TEMPTATION DOES TO YOU
I'M NOW PAYING FOR MY SINS AND I'M IN HELL
MY ANGEL HAS TO SAVE ME' IT IT'S TRUE

IT HAS TO BE REAL' NOTHING ABOUT US WAS FAKE
I'M HERE WAITING TO HEAR HER VOICE
JUST WAIT' SHE'LL BE BACK' WAIT
I REALLY HAVE NO OTHER CHOICE

TOTALLY OUT OF CONTROL' NO CONTROL
MY HEART TORN
SOMEONE GET ME OUT OF THIS 6 FOOT HOLE
IT FEELS LIKE I'M DEAD' BUT WOULD SHE BE THERE TO MOURN

SELFISH ON BOTH SIDES
IT'S ALL IN HER HANDS NOW
I PRAY SHE REALLY DOES LOVE ME
SHE'LL BE BACK SOMEDAY' SOMEHOW

HOWEVER LONG IT TAKES' I'LL BE HERE UNTAINTED
FIND YOURSELF' BABY GIRL' PLEASE
NO NEED TO ANY FURTHER EXPLAIN IT
DO WHAT YOU NEED TO DO' GIRL' JUST DON'T TEASE

IT'S JUST SO HARD AND I'M SO IMPATIENT
YOU KNOW ME BEST
THAT'S WHY IT'S SO HARD' I ENTRUSTED YOU WITH EVERYTHING
NOW PUTTING YOUR LOVE TO THE TEST

THE NEWFOUND RING TURNED AROUND
I JUMP OUT OF BED OUT OF MY HOLE
I HEAR THE VIBRATION' THAT FAMILIAR SOUND
I START TALKING' THE GIRL ON THE OTHER LINE' BEAUTIFUL

STEVE CARREON



Photo by Jim Linden



Photo by Jim Menden

DANGER AHEAD

*Lately, it seems I've been possessed
With a sudden uncontrollable need
To gather WARNING DANGER plastic strips
From un-safe sites on my sidewalk walking trips.*

*Oh, I've tried to stem the urge
I've lied to purge this urge
But try try as I may I cannot stay
The urge to steal and take away
Theses gaudy strips of many colors
Yellows, reds, orange and blues
Stark and glaring or lesser hues.*

*As I saunter strolling by
Seemingly gazing at the sky
Next to some large excavation
Ribbioned by plastic tapes of demarcation.*

*Suddenly, secretly, I snip a strip
And quickly roll it in a ball
And plunge it in my pockets tall.*

*Homeward, homeward, travel I
Never glancing toward earth or sky
Straight I stroll fast and true
With my strips of red and yellow
With my strips of orange and blue.*

*Safe at home I unwind each colored tape
And bind it stoutly to a garden stake
Stake to stake these strands of many
In and out these strands of plenty
Form a firm and fertile rope
To protect my tomatoes and cantaloupe.*

Bernie Bernstein

SICKING MUSE

POOR DESPERATE MUSE
WHAT AILS THE COMPLEXION
OF YOUR DEEP AWAKENING EYE
YOUR BODY OF STEALTH
SITTING THERE BY ONESELF
A PARALLEL DIMENSION
ITS PRISON HAS BEEN PERMEATED...
WITHIN YOUR THOUGHTS
A PLACE OF ETERNITY
WITHIN YOUR DESPERATE GRASP
YOUR STARES STILL WITHIN
THE VISIONS OF NIGHT AND DAYS TRUE ETERNAL MEANING
SICKING, EROTIC AROMAS OF SEXUAL TASTE
GHASTLY BEAUTIES OF MOST PLEASING TEASE
THEIR ENTICING APPEARANCE
TRAPPING YOUR INNOCENT MORTAL SOUL
GUIDING YOU TO YOUR ETERNAL REST
TO MAKE YOU WHOLE...
CORRUPTED FAERIES OF SICKING PLAY
ACCIDENTS BY DAY
DISASTERS BY NIGHT
IT'S ALL FOR THEIR GAIN
TO FEED OF YOUR FRIGHT
INNOCENT CURIOSITY AND CHILDISH WONDER
IS WHAT BLEEDS THEIR COLD EMOTIONLESS HEARTS
THE NIGHTMARE'S GRASP
IS WHAT YOU SEE BEFORE YOU
SUCH EVERLASTING TYRANNY
THE WHIRLPOOL OF REDEMPTION
DROWNING IN ITS CHURN
WHO WILL BE NEXT...?

IN PRAISE AND FAVOR TO THE FRENCH BOOK OF POEMS "THE FLOWERS OF EVIL" AND
NONE OTHER THAN THE POEM "SICK MUSE" BY CHARLES BAUDELAIRE AND
TRANSLATED BY FRANCIS DUKE.

Memory

What is a memory?

*A picture of a perfect world; faces, feelings, and time.
A wistful breeze, the branches on trees,
loving, sharing, and rhyme.*

*But time does go charging on, the night will break to a new dawn,
And the seasons will go rolling on.
Memories will always return like the morning light.
But like the dawn, it can bring a blinding light.*

*The endless downs come with a price, the burning brightness,
And a never ending strife.
Within the fondness of a memory there will always be the pain,
The coldness of reality that you'll never come home again.*

*Oh, how I long for that perfect world in time, before you went away. You are never again
to see the light of day, only the darkness in an endless sleep.
Though I may get burnt and how my tears may flow, I will cherish every morning and
memory, until my endless night comes too.
Then our endless dreams will meet, and our memories become one,
To create a perfect world, in which there is no time.*

What is a memory? ...

A picture of a perfect world; faces, feelings, and time.

For those who lost their lives on September 11, 2001

Katie Sickles



Auburn

A name that speaks its true meaning.
Can you see its torture yet beauty?
The sun is the true love,
Accentuating the reds in every strand
like dry wood feeding the flame.
The rays long to touch,
Creeping through the tiniest of openings
the trees will allow.
But there is another,
the moon.
A love kept hidden by the darkness.
Her matching eyes steal glances
at the pearl in the sky.
She wouldn't dare to look at her
true love that way.
Whispers burn her ears of mistaken identity.
The light shown through the night
peers into her soul,
Yet reminds her of another.
Her sun
In disbelief, the earth holds her sight.
The wind caresses her softly.
Plays with her locks as a child would curl his
mother's in between each finger.
Or is it the way a lover would touch her
ever so gently in the strongest of passion?
No longer trusting, she turns to the water.
He brings her gifts, secrets, and mystery.
The thrill appeals to her.
Going to him, her flame is extinguished.
The brown lingers as the water surrounds her.
She fell for him,
but will this love drown her?
Its beauty brings her torture.

Samantha Jo Angelo

The Baker's Dozen

A dozen red roses mean 12 different things,
The first says love never ending, fly forever on wings.
The second is for our own ideas, only you can decide,
The third is for the courage to stick by his side.
The fourth is for kindness, which everyone needs,
The fifth for the future, wherever it leads.
The sixth is for the present, living day to day,
The seventh is for faith, never to be led astray.
The eighth is for the past, which resides in us all,
The ninth is for the words unsaid, the writings upon the wall.
The tenth is for romance, the simple words "I Love you."
The eleventh is strength, all the times you have gotten through.
And finally the twelfth, which means forget me not.
But wait, here's another which sticks out from the lot.
This rose is yellow, for our friendship no doubt,
Because friends are just roses which we can't live without.
So a dozen red roses arranged differently with just one,
One yellow rose, a friendship, that can't be outdone.

Ashlie Jarosiewicz



Movin' On

My life is moving to a new chapter
I often fear what I will be leaving behind...
My friends, good memories, and laughter
Never to be seen again as the road of life begins to
wind.
Will they keep in touch?
Or will I be quickly forgotten?
Don't know why I think as such:
Usually pessimistic, rarely optimistic
Why do my thoughts tend to turn rotten?
But I shouldn't despair
Cuz that's the way of life, I just have to prepare
For this impending, drastic change
That will take me from my comfortable range.
Though I'll be leaving behind the old,
I will also be approaching the new.
So I've gotta be strong and bold
And not let my fears and insecurities turn me blue.
I've finally graduated,
I'm glad I made it.
I say it's time to catch my dream
And enjoy life, change ain't as bad as it may seem
In my head plays music that I'm groovin' on,
It helps me cope even better with movin' on!

Loren Garnett-Lewis



Circular

Circular seems the way things are meant to be
An illusion is all it was; the realization came too late
Is hope - - useless, senseless and for naught
Words say one thing and actions another
Unnoticed or ignored - - six of one - - half dozen of the other
With a mind that twists with fancy thought
Mine is confused and befuddled
No matter how hard I fight the flow
Fixed is the only place I go
Round and round a whirlpool
Till mind and body are broken in this dizzying existence
No air to breathe, no sky to see, only waves and turbulence greet me.

DAH



Photo by Lindsay Cropper



Alone

*Traveling these broken roads: looking
for someone I don't know.*

*Tripping over tree roots hidden by
the snow.*

*Calling out and listening, the reply
is just my own.*

*Echoing softly back to me like the
refrain of a poem.*

~Alone~

Ashlie Jarosiewicz

Who Am I?

SOMETIMES I WONDER IF I EVEN KNOW
I KNOW WHO I AM NOT
I AM NOT MY SKIN TONE OR THE WAY I TALK
I AM NOT MY DRESS SIZE OR MY AGE
I AM NOT MY EDUCATION OR MY OCCUPATION
I AM NOT MY MOTHER OR MY FATHER

SO WHO AM I?

I AM NOT WHAT YOU THINK
I AM MORE - - I AM LESS

I AM NOT A LABEL
LABELS ARE YOU - - THEY ARE NOT ME
I AM NOT AN ASSUMPTION - - WHAT YOU THINK I SHOULD BE

Who Am I?

I STILL DON'T KNOW BUT I'M LEARNING
FINDING THE ME INSIDE - - THE REAL ME
THE ONE NO ONE KNOWS
THE ME I WANT TO KNOW
THE ME WHO WANTS YOU TO SEE WHO I AM
NOT WHO I'M SUPPOSED TO BE

DAh

Ride

*Up and down, push and pull
Push and pull, up and down
The squeak of the tire against the road
The click of the gear settling into place
Up and down, push and pull
Slide back into the seat
Settle down into a crouch
Push and pull, up and down
Feel the wind pick up against my cheek
The sound as it whistles past my ear
Up and down, push and pull
Muscles of my legs ease in
The burn starts to fade
Push and pull, up and down
Lose myself on the road
As the wind lifts me away
Up and down, push and pull
Push and pull, up and down.*

Daniel Moyer



Love's melody

I look to your grave,
Was there truth in our melody?

Wind...

I felt the grace of god through you,
Have I finally lost all faith?

The wind...

Harmonies that had inspired us still play,
Can they inspire the souls of the dead?

To the wind...

I can no longer listen to the notes,
But do I still hear your voice?

Sing to the wind...

The music was ours, but I am now alone,
How can I continue on my own?

Dove, sing to the wind...

I raise my head to the sky,
Is there something you wish of me?

Please, love, sing to the wind...

Now I can sing again,

Without the question in my heart,

Please, love, sing to the wind...

I smile at the sky,

I will do what you would wish for me.

Dove, sing to the wind...

I am not alone, you are still with me,

I will go, I will continue on.

Sing to the wind...

I hear the notes and rejoice,

Each sounds like a memory of you.

To the wind...

May the harmonies play long after I join you,

I know they inspire the souls of all.

The wind...

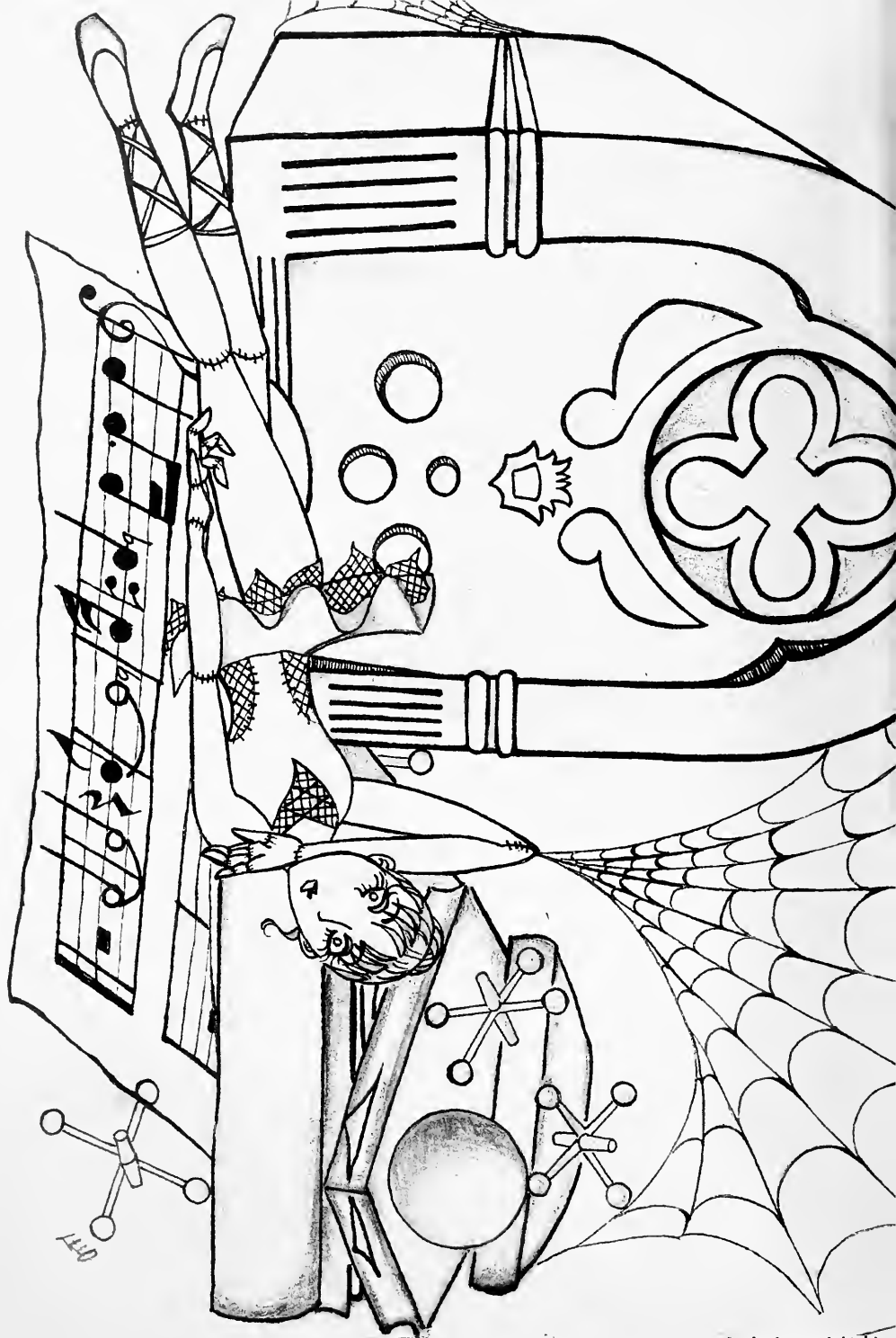
The grace of god moves through me,

My faith is restored.

Wind...

I see your face once more,
The truth is only in dove's Melody.

Rutie Sickles



Rainbow After

Gently falling, like an early spring rain;
Passion, hurt, and emotion swelling in the distance,
Inevitably it worsens relentlessly.
Foreboding and dreary, abruptly exploding upon you,
Like a ton of bricks dropped upon your head.
Then, concluding its rant, it leaves brusquely.
The rainbow after never seemed so enticing,
With only the somewhat detached,
Aloof atmosphere left as a memento.

Courtney Bower

Moonchaser – A Children's Poem

Moonchaser has but one goal,
As he chases fair Moon both high and low.
Ever since he has been a colt he had wanted her for himself,
So he could put her in a jar and keep her on a shelf.
He had never realized how he would hurt the sun,
And how dark it would be should he succeed in his fun.
Until the night he finally cornered "his" Moon,
He reared up at her and whinnied his tune.
"Moon!" beckoned he, "We meet at last!
"Come with me now, become a thing of the past!
You are to shine your light to me only,
Come with me now and we shall never be lonely!"
Moonchaser reared up, determination shown,
Though it was only now that he realized how much he had grown.
For he could now see Moon's eyes, beautiful indeed,
And admired her so, as she admired the steed.

A grin played across Moon's delicate face
She spoke softly to the steed, moving at his pace.
"Moonchaser, Moonchaser, I admire you so!
But belong to one being? Heavens no!
I watch as you follow me, faithfully through the nights,
And you have kept up well, despite your many plights.
I have become attached to you and wish you well,
But can you imagine the nights if I fell?

I belong to the sky with both Sun and Star,
They are my brothers, and I will not venture far.
You are not the only one to admire me,
Although you the only one to try and take me, as far as I can see.
You are the first to show such ideas and persistence,
But as for you taking me, I must show resistance."

Moonchaser arose at Moon's reply, "But fair Moon, why can't I have you, why?
Who needs any other if I have you?
And brother Sun can keep the sky both night and blue.
I have followed you over water and land,
And through deserts with hot scorching sand,
I've risked my freedom traveling through man's territory,
It is true; I have a one of a kind life story.
But I have come all this way and have nothing to show,
For the fact I got to talk to you and relish in your glow.
Fair Moon, what will I have if I do not have you?
I'll have nothing to live for and nothing to do!"

Lady Moon listened throughout the young one's plea,
"But why would you want to spend eternity with me?
I am old with no stories of my own,
And have no love to give, and even less to loan.
Because I belong to everyone, be you man or beast,
I am wise beyond years, decades at least.
But young one, I will not let your journey end in vain.
But believe me now; you will no longer be plain!"

Just then a star fell from the sky,
And it kissed Moonchaser between his delicate eyes.
And then a bright light fell upon the mountain,
Followed by a yellow and starry fountain.
Moonchaser felt nothing, but something was unique now.
Although he didn't know exactly what, why or how.
And he wouldn't know just what it was until her brother Sun shone,
Because Moon's light was not enough to do it alone.

Moon smiled brightly, her face now alight,
"Now you will always remember me and this special night.
This is my gift to you, take care of it, please.
I will always be here for you, if you have pain to ease.
But I must go now; my brother is coming up over there,
Beware of his light; it's both vivid and fair.
You will see my gift in his wondrous light,
And you will always remember this very night."

With that said Moon set below the land and Sun then rose,
What brilliance the yellow Sun did pose!
In the light Moonchaser did see the gift Moon gave,
It was something to keep, it was something to save.
It always glimmered brightly in the new morning light,
And shown even brighter on Moon's full night.
You see Moon gave the spirited one a single silver horn,
And so became Moonchaser the unicorn.

Ashlie Jarosiewicz



Rise, Phoenix, Rise

Like the Phoenix
Rising from the ashes
Being reborn anew
Wiser from the battles lost
Ready to face life's struggles again

She was a broken creature
A shadow of her former self
Now she is reborn anew
Stronger from rebirth
Ready to challenge the world again

Her song was once silenced
The world was darker without her voice
Now reborn from the ashes
She rises from the fires
Singing her song for all to sing

2-13-06

Aimee Strouse

History in the Mistaking

*Times long gone
Times long stayed
Regrets and mistakes
None shall ever say
Tell we might
A tale
A tall tale
To keep yet its true secret
But stay nonetheless a truthful lie
Though yet there is some light
A shinning white
No color could ever illustrate
Memories and victories
Success!
But to its limits
Suffering comes before happiness
You are of one
A speck amongst the "great tapestry"
The insolent ant amongst the "great all seeing eye"
One among many
It takes one to be one
One voice
One power
One world
One life*

By Asia Williams







FIRE

FIRE BURN
AND FIRE ROAR
DEEP INSIDE
LET IT SOAR
WILD AND FREE
LET IT SEE
TO THE SICKNESS THAT AILS THEE
BARE TO ALL THAT HAS STRIPPED
THEE OF HOPE
BARE TO ALL IN REPLACE TO START A NEW
OPEN UP THE POWER INSIDE YOU...

ASIA WILLIAMS

“My Angel”

*Eyes a beautiful brown, words spoken
but I hear not a sound, I'm too lost
in a world of Kings and Queens, her
hair in a beautiful crown, calm
when she's here but lost when she's
not around, bringing a smile to my
face even when I'm feeling down, But
seriously I believe she could be an
Angel, on Earth to save my life,
amazing how she makes me feel,
maybe she could be my wife, I even
thought twice, now, tell me how,
despite, in a world full of grains of
rice, this girl could be the one that
treats me right, in my mind I
couldn't find a reasoning for
existence, I asked myself whose and
what kind of life is this, just then I
saw her light glisten past my door,
breath-taking bliss my heart fell to
the floor, I took a chance on the girl
that caught my eye, and to the
heavens my Angel and I will fly.*

Jaryd Steinbacher



Photo by Danielle Friedrich

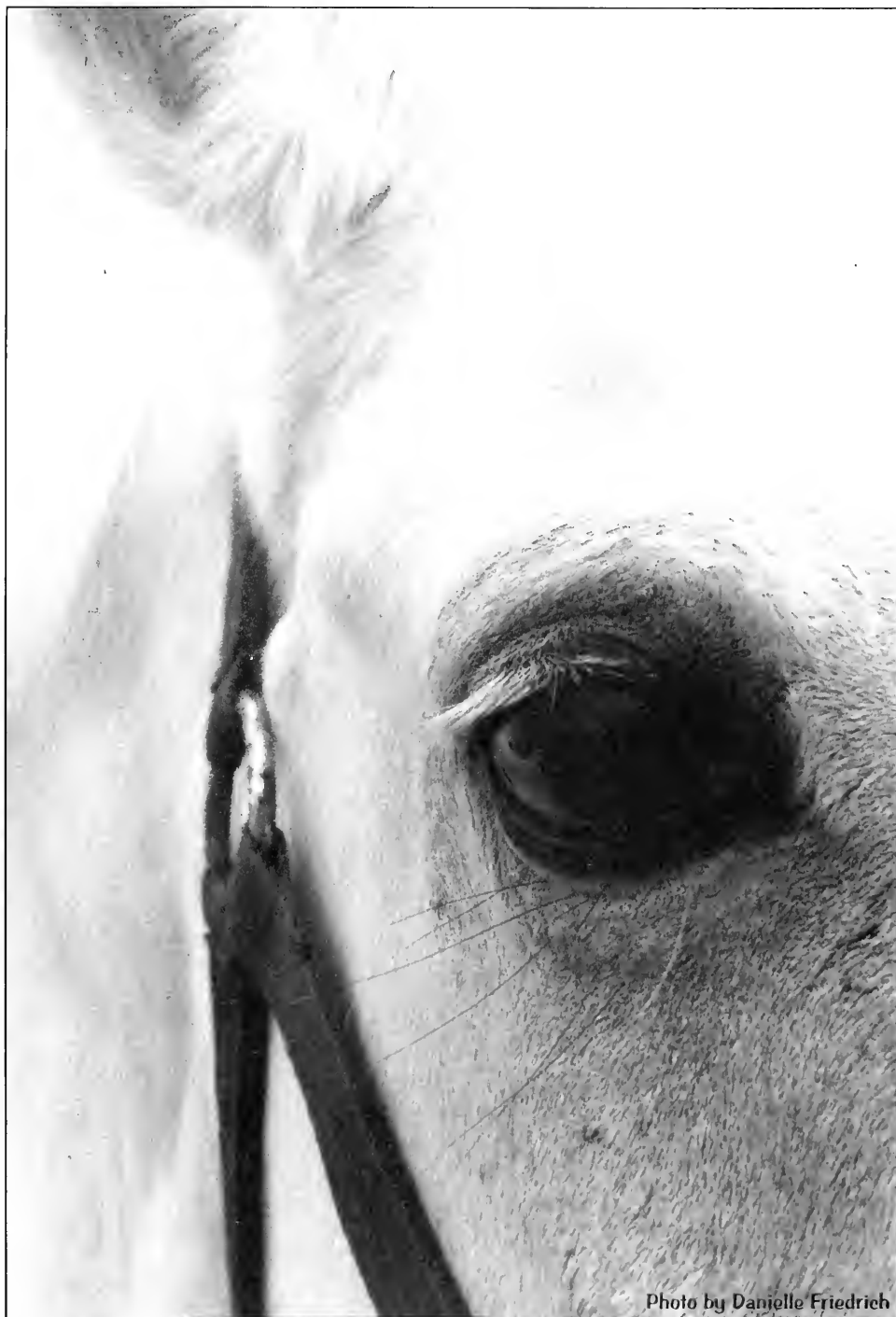


Photo by Danielle Friedrich

2006 Dedication

Mrs. Ruth Moran – Kindergarten Teacher

~ Truth in Legends ~

Over – beyond what man has seen
Where time passes slowly in dreams
There stood a castle – surrounded by woods
Where an enchantress' mystical powers stood

Day by day – beginning with morning light
She spread her wonderful wings in flight
Her song of course could only be heard
By trees and others – who grew where they stood

Butterflies would follow – like tails of a kite
While trees grew strong and tall with her might
No matter which plant came to be
She loved with a love none of us could see

And so the woods grew through ages behind
Legends of man were told of treasures to find
But none dared to enter her dominion and look
So these rhymes just collected in books

Yet one would come – with glittering eyes
Who always seemed followed by fireflies
She too could make anything grow
And into the woods she always had urges to go

And the day would come when resistance failed
Beyond the trees to the enchantress she hailed
The castle gates gleamed with silver and gold
While the castle walls were of crystal I'm told

The enchantress knew just what this meant
For she was once a girl – before many years spent
And greeting her with mystic, flickering eyes
The enchantress passed her magic to where it now lies

This girl took in all the powers that passed
From elder to youth all legends were stashed
For it was now this young girl's turn
To rule the forests with the spells she learned

As for the enchantress, do not fear
She lived on within the castle, my dear
For even though she passed all she knew
Her love for the forest forever grew

The forest shall never forget and neither will she
For truth and legends are quite deeper than the sea...

LMP

NOTHING TO WRITE...

tonight not one new thought not
one new word not one new pearl
of wisdom comes to mind. I'm
up because of the heat I can't
sleep because the heat won't let
me sleep, the house is all closed
in because of the air conditioning.

I can't fall back to sleep so I'll
write something. I'll write anything
'cause who the hell is going to
read it anyway; everyone has his or
her own problem I'm sure they needn't
be concerned with a sleepless old man
that's just too hot to fall asleep
with his poop poop poop about no sleep.

So I'll try this time to go to bed and
dream good dreams about the lord and me
to see if that can't put me to sleep
for sure so I could snore and snore
and finally fall fast yes fast asleep in
my bed like lead, like I'm dead.

Bernie Bernstein

The Gleaner

*High School Writing
Competition*

The English Department
is very happy to have sponsored its second
high school writing competition,
which was designed to showcase the work
of young writers in the area.

A Christmas Carol

7 o'clock, dark and windy
i saw
a deer
asleep on the side of the street
sprawled, running
eyes lit up by the headlights
lit up and empty and asleep and
no one will move it off the asphalt

it will rot on the road, and little children
peeking faces out backseat windows
will shudder quietly
draw back into warmth and safety
but they won't let on,
won't give a hint as to what scared them

because it's cold outside
it's the end of december
and halfway through the weak
spin-drunk week between Christmas and New-Year's
and nothing bad can happen

and the deer is just asleep
just resting in the dirt
legs tucked under, reaching and
broken
eyes still staring into the headlamp-glow that hummed and hovered and hypnotized
hearing the horn

and then the dull thud,
and a dying deer falling to its knees
but the truck drove on, radio blaring:

it's the most wonderful time of the year.

Austin Tally
The George School
Grade 12
English Teacher: Mr. Terry Culleton

ALEXANDER HAMILTON RUNS THE VODOO DOWN

In the seventh month
Of eighteen hundred and four
The eleventh day

The place: Weehawken
That ancient, mystical land
State of New Jersey

A man with a beef
The one they call Aaron Burr
He steps on the scene

His adversary
Alexander Hamilton
Professional jerk

"And now," said Aaron
"Time to settle this, big boy
Settle it with guns."

VP Burr waited
No response was forthcoming
Just a sullen stare

"You hearing me, boy?"
The Vice President goads on
"Are you listening?"

"I know it was you
Cost me that governorship
And you'll pay for that

I thought I told you
That gun control means using
Both hands in my land."

Again he awaits
But only stony silence
While two snake eyes glare
Burr done had enough
"We're finishing this, Ham-Man
Your number is up

No more tariffs or
Strong federal government
Or excise taxes

And seriously
Who thinks a national bank
Is a good idea?

You're really a dick
And a Federalist prick—
It just makes me sick."

Having thus spoken
Burr done raised his revolver
He fired a shot

Cold pellet of death
Annihilation-bearer
Target: Hamilton

Strikes with precision
And bounces off harmlessly
Bullet falls to ground

Glistening wings unfold
Alexander Hamilton
Reveals his true form

Titanium skin
Great steel legs like a spider
Photon cannons, too

Rising to full height
By which I mean freaking tall
Really freaking tall

Burr falls to his knees
Before the dreadful visage
Weeps at the horror

Ultra-Hamilton
Casts one last gaze of contempt
Burrows underground

Thus he disappeared
And no one on Earth knows
When he will return

...except me.

Tim Nelms
West Chester East High School
Grade 12
Teacher: Mrs. Jenkins

Godspeed

Speedometer creeps up to

(60)

(70)

(80)

Eyes watering and stinging,

Take your hands off the wheel

The car swerves onto the wrong side

Of the bright yellow lines

For a split second

Close your eyes and,

Careening into the black uncertainty

Of the unknown,

Take the corner on two wheels

Whiz by dangerously close to the

(tree)

(bridge)

(telephone pole)

Sunroof open,

Motor snarling beneath you,

Laughing into the black face under the tires

You can hear the wind

Screaming past your left cheek,

But all you can see

Are the insides of your eyelids

Daring you to lift them,

To save yourself

And for just a moment

Danger can't touch you,

Basking in

(immortality)

(glory)

(the sun)

Sarah Ochocki

Wissahickon High School

Grade 11

English teacher: Mrs. Smith

lacking nothing

that old stretch of a dirt road,
surrounded by solid plains and existing
under a wistful blue sky-
i could recognize it anywhere.

our trip, a break from uniformity of everyday
life, planned precisely,
right down to every road
and every turn we should have made.

but something happened. he broke away
from his life- or maybe he slipped into it-
and we found ourselves on that
unknown farm road, as out of place in our lives
as we were on its path.

and then our car broke down, piercing
light into shadows of old routines. our perfection
was never meant for that stretch
of life. and even though we broke,
it was breaking together that made
all the difference.

the air was still, whispering no secrets nor help
in our ears
that time. it was just the two
of us, alone, with nothing
to stand in between. and so

he started talking. he had to.
the air would have swallowed
us in emptiness otherwise. he talked
for all the years we hadn't,
and somehow it was forgiveness, too.

no one came to help us that day
we were broken, but that was
exactly what we needed. we managed
to fix our car, ourselves, not quite
so perfect. close enough.

that old stretch of a dirt road-
it changed the air between us.

jennifer weber
hunterdon central regional high school
grade 10
english teacher: ms. malzone

Memory

Happy. Happy at last. With a euphoric sense of falling, I ride the thunderstorm's ominous ebony clouds to my destination: England. I get off deep in the heart of London, where I hob-knob with Marley and a rather rowdy crowd of poltergeists. I sip tea in a deserted warehouse, dressed in spider-webs and moonlight, and stalk through mounds of splintered crates and moldy packing chips stinking of mildew. I meander about the ancient standing stones of pagan rituals where unspeakable acts to nameless, obscene gods were performed long ago. So long ago...

I ride an outgoing snowstorm to America. The blizzard strikes as scheduled, over the state of Maine. Over the sound of coastal waves braking on rocky crags, the teeth of the shore, I hear the lonely howling sound of a lost wolf cub, dying in the blizzard. Quickly, I race over to it and wait for its blood to freeze and for it to die. It does, within a matter of hours (a quick amount of time, in which I counted all the beautifully crystalline snowflakes as they fell) and it follows me on my journey. We catch a Northeasterner to Washington, D.C., where I stop at the Library of Congress, after saying hello to my old friend Abraham Lincoln. The books each have their own unique and ethereal aura which I can taste and touch and feel: the slimy calamari taste of Lovecraft, the sea-salty tuna of Hemingway, the exotic stardust spice of Bradbury, the bitter vinegar of Poe, and the plum-pudding of Dickens. I feel the dagger in Romeo's heart; a cascade of pixie dust from Tinkerbell's wand; and the chaotic forces of wild magic coursing through me while I recite ancient runes from worm-eaten grimoires detailing all of the universe's forbidden secrets. I smell the sulfur of Dante's Hell, the aroma of fresh cinnamon rolls coming from Calpurnia's kitchen, and the oily stench of Mieville's magical steamtechnology being repaired, all overlapping an unimaginable stink of age, dust, and yellowed pages. It reminds of a place I used to know...

We walk along abandoned game trails, the paths of the deer, and under the deep waters of many streams. I watch as fish and sometimes murky amphibious lake monsters avoid us, unnerved by our presence. The wolf pup bounds along at my side, untiring but still trying in vain to eat and drink, chasing game it can never catch.

It still remembers what it was in life, unlike me.

Under the night sky, I listen to the music of the spheres, accompanied by a platoon of crickets and a single, solitary owl. It is beautiful, but it doesn't help my condition. Not anymore.

I have forgotten. I have forgotten my name, my past, my home, and I in turn have been forgotten.

I am now both more and less than human. I converse with the October People, and my social circles involve eldritch ghouls who weave horrendous tales in their decrepit tomb-cities as they eat the dead of civilizations long since buried by the sands of time and crumbling, wizened mummies who cavort with Anubis and other, darker deities in their hoary pyramids of far-off Egypt. I have heard Poseidon's trident clash with the gibbering, formless horrors that swim in the sea's trenches, and the moans of damned souls wandering the Earth for all eternity. I am all-knowing, and information flows through me like gore through an open wound. I see the diffuse wonders of God's creation: the deepest oceans, filled with the ruins of lost continents pre-human and ill-shaped glowing fish; the underground caverns of the Earth, where through strange alchemy coal changes to crystal, and foul abominations beyond human conception churn and creep; the highest layers of atmosphere, where transcended beings dwell like powerful emperors; and the starry vacuum of glittering stars and glowing, diffuse nebulae. I climb into the dreams of poets and the nightmares of madmen, viewing Morpheus' murky and empyreal land in all its malleable glory, a world of noble knights and futuristic sky-cities, hideous gargoyles and scenes of fear that defy even my description. I hear the wing beats of angels, the whispering conversations of the Faerie, and the mad, cackling laughter of infernal demons. But I feel nothing for I cannot care...

I am a specter. A whirl of the imagination, a spot of frigid air, a gloomy shape lurking in attics and garages, that is me. In my undeath, I have the power to reduce myself to the smallest atomic particle and float around a nucleus, as well as the power to explore the bizarre planetoids of the Kuiper Belt, where silicon-based extraterrestrials dream electric dreams, but I have not the power to remember who I was. Did I even have a name? Who was I?

I was...I was...

I Am Ghost.

Justin Schoener
Council Rock North
Grade 12
English teacher: Ms. Andrea Lamberth

"Stargazing"

"Don't you wish you could just catch them and keep them in a jar?" She said,
gazing up at the summer sky.

"How do you propose we light the sky, then?" Laughing slightly, his hand crept across the soft grass and rested on top of hers. The hill was green and wet with dew, glistening in the light of the moon and the brilliant stars of July. The two stargazers drank in the celestial scene, stars twinkling a myriad of colors like faceted crystals in the sun. The moon was almost full, shining an ethereal light upon the two, giving everything on a grassy hill a hue of blue and silver. Every so often, a shooting star would streak through the cerulean blanket of sky, a bittersweet reminder of the evanescence of beauty.

A warm breeze quietly rustled the leaves of the tree above them.

She lifted her hand, absently tracing the murky white line of the Milky Way across the sky. "It makes you feel kind of small, doesn't it?" She whispered.

"I guess it does. Just ...to know that there's so much out there." He looked up at the infinite expanse of deep azure, his eyes moving from one star of the Big Dipper to the next. Here, on this perfect night, he felt he could actually see the image painted into the heavens. His gaze moved from the patchwork of stars and finally fell upon her face. Her deep blue eyes drew him in, until it seemed as though he could drown in them. The reflection of the sky glistened in her irises, sparkling like the heavens themselves. He was almost sure he could make out the Milky Way, and the Big Dipper, and the moon, and hundreds of other celestial marvels in those eyes. He found himself lost in the starry orbs, not sure if he could ever withdraw himself from her gaze.

"They're so beautiful," she breathed, still immersed by the dancing lights in the
sky.

"Yes," he said without shifting his focus, "they are."

Whitney Dearden
Council Rock High School North
Grade 12
Teacher: Ms. Andrea Lamberth

The Great Escape:

The Grand Episode of Julia Huang & Huckleberry Finn

I connected the dots on the parabolic curve, sloping gently towards infinity at the top of the paper. Finished with algebra homework, I stood up and stretched while casting a glance around my room: a half-packed suitcase for this weekend's Key Club board meeting, a canvas propped against the wall, scattered pastels on the floor... Then, outside my window, a tiny square of light painted against the dark night caught my eye. With a sudden, spontaneous flight of the imagination, I grabbed my jacket, tiptoed down the stairs, and slipped out into the airy night.

The grass was slick and wet under my bare feet as I crossed the yard towards the cabin from which the light was shining. The familiar silhouette of a small boy appeared on the other side. He moved briskly as he tore a hole in the sack he was carrying and fine cornmeal sifted out into a trail. He disappeared with it towards the creek behind his cabin, and came back leading a canoe by rope. I made a move to call out to him, but stopped myself. Since school started, we didn't talk much anymore.

Last year, Huck and I became unlikely companions. Initially, I only watched him from a distance with fascination and slight amusement at the carefree mischief he caused in the streets. In time, a friendship grew in the thin space where the circles of our two universes merged in a Venn diagram. In his simplicity, he viewed my world with easygoing candor; untainted by society's conventional wisdoms about race, money, and friendships, his almost naïve, yet insightful perceptions transcended learned prejudices. It was in moments I felt spread too thin, pulled in too many directions that I sought his companionship most. On those nights, I'd climb out my window and we would lie on the grass in the neighbor's orchard. Under the soft streaks of moonshine behind wisps of gray clouds, I'd take a good look at him, Huckleberry Finn, with half of his young face hidden in shadow. I didn't envy him or his life, yet I never tired of hearing his suspicions that there weren't really any Spaniards and the "A-rabs" were only a Sunday school picnic. Most nights, though, he'd just listen to me think out loud. I'd talked about a new book I found, complain about my family, or wonder where I would be in a few years. And despite the irony of the topics I chose, Huck never objected. Once in a while, he'd take a bite of a stolen apple, chew thoughtfully and reply, "Well, Jules, I reckon' you jes' think too much."

I was shaken from my thoughts by the sudden movements ahead. With a jolt, I saw Pap's skiff coming down the river. Huck lost no time and pushed his canoe off the muddy bank, sending soft ripples through the water. I held my breath as I watched him drift downstream. Silently, I wished him grand adventures. Breathing in all things authentic, I turned around and as quietly as I could, ran through the adjacent yard back home: chemistry awaited.

Julia Huang
Council Rock North
Grade 12
Ms. Andrea Lamberth

The Hospital Volunteer

For three hours a week (really two hours and 45 minutes),
I sit in the cramped Patient Transport office:
Walls without windows
Painted a sickly yellow color.
A row of oxygen canisters
In neat, shiny lines.
And a large picture of roses in a vase, with "Volunteers Add That Special Touch" written beneath.
Irritated nurses summon me to some corner of the building through the little black pager,
Which emits an unearthly rattling and
Startles only me every time.
When I reach for the hand sanitizer it squirts antibacterial foam all over me.

The scent of the hospital sticks to me long after I leave my shift.
It smells of a variety of chemicals-
That mysterious liquid inside a syringe,
Disinfectant covering up all sorts of unpleasant somethings.
Of scrubs garishly patterned with flowers and swirls,
Grumpy technicians returning from smoking breaks,
And, of course,
I catch whiffs of sorrow, of death,
Which I'm sure circulates through the air vents.

My patient is heaved unceremoniously upon the immaculate white sheets of the stretcher.
They are always the same sick soul, reincarnated in a new form every week.
Always, they lie there surrounded by bags of fluid and a tangle of tubes,
Oxygen up the nose, making gasping noises like enormous fish.
As I roll them down the hallways, I want to ask them,
"Do you wonder about who lay on this stretcher before you?
Who was being pushed in pain here yesterday?
Someone with a hip replacement? Kidney stones? Gout?"
Doesn't matter, now you all have something in common.
I am steering so clumsily, coming close to walls and food carts,
That I am almost glad the patient is incapable of noticing.

I take my transport to the CAT-Scan, the X-Ray, the Ultrasound,
Whatever piece of complicated machinery it happens to be this time.
Good little UPS Man of the medical world.
As I leave to go sit in the tiny office again,
I wonder if a fundamental difference between people
Is whether they see the hospital as a heaven or hell,
Or if it is actually a limbo
Where someone may inadvertently make the decision:
You live. You die. You will be back again,

Oh yes, you will be back again.

Upon My Canvas

(In the style of Aurora Morales)

I am an artist

A restless adolescent voiced in delicate brushstrokes,
A child of depiction, forever devoted to the devotion of my masters.

I am Van Gogh, a visionary lost in drunken dreams,
A hundred dormant houses under blazing stars and a crescent moon,
Neglected sunflowers, gasping for air through withered leaves.
I am the distant cry of ominous winds, howling with the agony of defeat.
The skies are alive tonight.

I am Monet, the poet of impressionism,
The silent serenity of a bridged stream,
Gardens of lily pads and blossoms,
Flourishing in the smudges of romantic pastels.
I am the youthful image of a woman, pausing in the wheat fields,
The gentle wind ruffles my skirt and tempts my parasol,
Hoping to lure it into the breeze.

I am Frida, the warrior of oil pastels,
My own bleeding heart pounds against my palm,
The colors hide my eyes of anger,
Morbid themes tend my open wounds of grief.
I am a collection of self-portraits, each of my faces stares back in contemplation,
The sinister winds howl behind my sullen eyes,
The paint is my gun and the hues my bullets.

I am Warhol, enthusiast of the iconic world,
I am Marilyn Monroe, Mao Zedong, and a Campbell's Soup can,
My inverted colors paint faces of stars,
Begging for something different, begging for a change,
The desperate wind rushes through blue ears and green hair,
Wishing for the illustration of a movement.

I am an artist. I will go where the wind takes me.
For now, the canvas is blank.

Lauren Kimmel
Council Rock North High School
Grade 12
English teacher: Ms. Andrea Lamberth

Vinegar and Salt
Nothing tastes better than
fish n' chips
in this Scottish town

Bought for 3 pounds at the nearby chip shop
Where I imagine all the locals go
Where the chap behind the counter calls me "love"
and asks whether I'd like "vinegar and salt with that?"
Where I fall briefly in love with the bloke doing the frying
who I can just see in the back, his sideburns and sure hands,
the grease stains smeared on his white T-shirt suggestively---
Where "take out" is called "take away" and
the wooden fork is free but the ketchup packets are 30 pence each

Nothing tastes better than
fish n' chips
in this Scottish town

After a long training run through narrow streets
past gardens and bowling greens and dogs barking with Scottish accents
sweat drenching, legs aching, ears ringing, rain pouring, sky draining, darkness
descending

When I collapse on my bed in our B&B,
drunk with tiredness and in love with everything,
I taste sweat and summer while chewing
and also an imagined flavor that makes me blush as I swallow---
the frying bloke's hot greasy mouth pressed against mine

And then the complicated taste that I am ravenous for:
triumph---
 vinegar
and
 salt

I am devouring Scotland
I will never be full

Cara Liuzzi
Abington Friends School
Grade 11
English teacher: Ms. Mary Lynn Ellis

WINTER

Winter is a crying woman
Locked in a little white room.
Her screams shiver the trees,
And when she whispers to herself,
Rocking herself
Throughout the lonely nights,
Snow outside my window flurries down
Like snatches of overheard conversation.

Sometimes she grows afraid.
Paralyzed by fear, she shrinks away
From the terrors lying hidden
In the white walls that imprison her.
Or she will rage for days on end,
Beat her fists and rake fingernails along the floor.
But she will eventually calm,
And only silent slush remains as evidence.

One day, she reaches for the door
And finds that it was open all along.
Like a vapory exhalation on a chilly morning,
She slips away.
Winter is a crazy woman,
A ghost who comes again each year.

Violet Kupersmith



The Gleaner

Is published during the academic year by
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